



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1406 Longworth House Office Building • Washington, D.C. 20515 • (202) 225-5506

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 14, 2005

Contact: Stephanie Lundberg
Phone: 202-225-5506

Kind Seeks to Strengthen Accountability in Mississippi Lock and Dam Project

Provision Assures Environmental/Economic Balance

Washington, DC – With the anticipated passage of the bipartisan supported Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which includes a project to modernize the Mississippi River lock and dam system, U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) will offer an amendment today to strengthen Congressional oversight of Army Corps of Engineer projects and to assure the Corps' commitment to the \$1.6 billion ecosystem restoration component of the \$3.4 billion lock and dam project.

"The Mississippi lock and dam system, which is essential to our state's agriculture industry, clearly needs to be brought up to date to safely meet current and future demand, and I will support this bill so that modernization can take place. But as this project gets underway, we must ensure federal resources are balanced between its equal components-lock construction and ecosystem restoration," said Rep. Kind, founder and Co-Chair of the Upper Mississippi River Congressional Task Force. "This amendment is meant to make sure that the ecological health of the river isn't given short shrift by ensuring that ecosystem restoration and lock construction move forward at a comparable rate of progress and additionally that the taxpayer dollars funding this project and others are being spent properly."

Kind's amendment aims to ensure that ecosystem restoration is pursued concurrently with construction by clarifying Congress' authority over Corps projects; and with regard to the lock and dam project, requiring the Corps to submit an annual progress report to Congress. Specifically, the amendment:

- 1) Adds a new provision requiring the Secretary of the Army to make an annual report to Congress on whether the lock and dam construction and ecosystem restoration projects are being carried out at comparable rate of progress.
- 2) Inserts the words, 'or Congress' to clarify that Congress will share the authority with the Secretary in determining if the projects are moving forward at a comparable rate of progress and adjust the annual funding accordingly.

The House will take a vote on the WRDA bill this afternoon.